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## **Informational testimony regarding House Bill 534 to the Judiciary Committee**

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Good morning Madam Chair, committee members, my name is Todd Harwell and I am the Chief of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Bureau, which is located within the Public Health and Safety Division of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. If I may, I would like to pass out a copy of my testimony. I would like to provide you with some information to consider regarding the burden death and injury associated with non-use of motor cycle helmets among Montanans.

### **Death**

- Between 1999 and 2004, 76 Montanans died in a motor cycle crash.
- Over 90% of these deaths were among boys and men, and 64% were among Montanans less than 44 years of age.
- Montana had the 11<sup>th</sup> highest motor cycle crash death rate in the United States.

### **Injury**

- Data from the Montana trauma registry illustrates the burden of the lack of use of motor cycle helmets among riders.
- Between 2003 and 2006, 573 riders were hospitalized for trauma related to a motor cycle crash.
- The number motor cycle crash-related hospitalizations have increased every year since 2003.
- The average age of persons hospitalized was 41 years and 20% of hospitalizations were among persons less than 24 years old.
- 23% of these hospitalizations were admitted to the intensive care unit, 24% had a surgical procedure completed, and 2% died in the hospital.
- 55% of riders hospitalized from a crash were not wearing a helmet.

- As you can see in the figure, un-helmeted riders were over two times more likely to sustain any head injury or a mild to moderate head injury compared to riders wearing a helmet.
- Un-helmeted riders were over four times more likely to sustain a severe head injury compared to riders wearing a helmet.

Madam Chair, committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Figure. Head injuries among motor cyclists wearing and not wearing helmets, Montana Trauma Registry, 2003-2006.**

